

REMARKS

The rejection of claim 8 under 35 C §102(b)(e) over the McClinton '568 and Gobled '000 patents have been obviated by revising claim 8 so that it more specifically distinguishes the invention from the prior art of record.

Claim 8 now defines the invention in terms of “improved apparatus for molding steering wheels, wherein the improvement comprises a mask for covering parting surfaces of steering wheel molding members, . . .” Claim 8 has been further revised to more clearly recite the function of the peripheral portion of the mask:

“a peripheral portion covering parting surfaces of a coated-portion steering wheel molding member in the state in which the mask is mounted to the coated-portion molding member, and preventing the formation of flash around a periphery of a molded steering wheel from said coating.”

By contrast, none of the references of record either discloses or suggests the invention defined in amended claim 8. All the McClinton '568 patent discloses is a method of preparing a patterned mold surface in the manufacture of a molded article such as a masonry building unit. It is not in the least concerned with an improved apparatus for molding steering wheels. Accordingly, amended claim 8 is patentable over the McClinton '568 patent for this reason alone. But there is another reason as well. While this reference does disclose the use of a masking material 12 over a selected portion of a mold 10, the disclosed mask neither discloses nor suggests the recited peripheral portion for both “covering parting surfaces of a coated-portion steering wheel molding member, and preventing the formation of flash around a periphery of a molded steering wheel from said coating. . .” Accordingly, amended claim 8 is clearly patentable over the McClinton '568 patent.

The Gobled '000 patent similarly irrelevant to amended claim 8. Again, this reference is directed toward manufacturing a molded piece of plastic that is painted in part; it is not in the least concerned with the recited “improved apparatus for molding steering wheels...” Moreover, the “peel-off” film neither discloses, nor is the least suggestive of the recited peripheral portion for both covering parting surfaces of coated

portions steering wheel molding members and “preventing the formation of flash around a periphery of a molded steering wheel from said coating ..” Consequently, claim 8 is clearly patentable over the Gobled ‘000 patent.

Claims 9, 10, 11 and 12 have each been revised so that their wording is now consistent with the new language added to amended claim 8. As each of these claims is dependent upon claim 8, each claim is accordingly patentable at least by reason of such dependency.

Finally, new claims 18 through 22 are each patentable not only by reason of their dependency upon claim 8, but for their recitation of additional structural features which are neither disclosed nor remotely suggested in the cited prior art.

Claim 18 recites that the peripheral portion means is “circular”, a limitation disclosed in neither the McClinton nor Gobled references, which it at best disclose a mask that is only perhaps partially circular.

Claim 19 specifies that the peripheral portion means “is formed from a rigid material...” By contrast, the “peel-off” film 20 of the Gobled reference is non-rigid. Similarly, the masking material of McClinton appears to be formed from a thin sheet material that is readily removable from the mold 10.

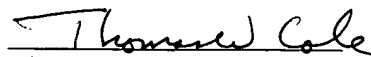
Claim 20 is patentable by virtue of its recitation that the mask “includes at least one member for removably mounting said peripheral portion to said molding member. . . .”

Claim 21 is patentable by virtue of its recitation that the mask includes “at least one gripping portion”.

Finally, claim 22 is patentable by virtue of its recitation that the mask includes “a concave or convex central portion. . .”

Now that all the claims are believed to be patentable, the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is hereby earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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